Two years ago the rue Marr, the Place des Moutons were still such that one didn't know where one had been set down and that not even the farthest East or the most central Africa would have had, I believe, a more stupefying taste of the exotic. A very different form of life and completely realized on the exterior; very full, ancient, classical, established; no compromise yet between the civilizations of the Orient and ours, which appears ugly, especially when it tries to repair something. Sheets of iron or zinc are replacing little by little the screens of reeds as roofing for the souks, and street-lamps distribute the light by fits and starts on walls formerly bathed in the even light of the moon — on that vast Place des Moutons, without sidewalks, silent and wonderful, where two years ago in the warmth of full moonlight nights camels and Arabs used to come and sleep. The door of a mosque would open; some Arabs grouped around a lantern would come out, stop in the street, and sing a monotonous religious chant.

Now sidewalks have been laid in the souks. In one of the finest alleyways the base of the little columns that support the vault is buried. Twisted, green and red colonnettes with a massive and figured capital. The vault is whitewashed, but barely lighted. Even on the most radiant days these souks are always half-dark. The entrance to the souks is marvelous; I am not speaking of the portico of the mosque, but of that other narrow, withdrawn entrance shaded by a leaning jujube tree which makes a sort of prefatory shade for the dark little alleyway that turns sharply and is lost to view. But the jujube tree, covered with leaves in the autumn, hasn't any yet this spring. This is the beginning of the saddlers' souk; the alley turns, then continues indefinitely.

In the perfumery souk Sadouk-Anoun still sits cross-

legged in his little shop, a mere recess in the wall, with its floor elbow-high and cluttered with flasks; but the perfumes he sells today are diluted. On my return to Paris I gave to Valery the last two authentic bottles, which I saw Sadouk-Anoun fill, using a pipette, with essence of apples and, drop by drop, precious amber. He no longer wraps them up today, now that they are half-filled with a commoner merchandise, so minutely with virgin wax and white thread and doesn't make me pay so dearly for them.

Two years ago, with Laurens, his meticulousness had amused us; it seemed to give their proper value to things. With each added wrapping the perfume became rarer. Finally we stopped him, for our purse would not have sufficed.

I also sought in vain that dark caf 6 where the only habitues were tall Negroes from the Sudan. Some of them had their big toe cut as a sign of slavery. Most of them wore, stuck in their turban, a little sprig of white flowers, of fragrant jasmine, which intoxicates them; it falls along